

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 104448

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S/S-O:JHOGANSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 104448

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FOL RPT TEL AVIV 3007 ACTION SECSTATE 29 APR QUOTE

S E C R E T TEL AVIV 3007

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS LE

SUBJ: ALLON TALKS ABOUT LEBANON

1. WHEN I CALLED ON HIM THIS MORNING PRIOR TO DEPARTING ON HOME LEAVE, ALLON GAVE ME THE LATEST ISRAELI APPRAISAL OF DEVELOPMENTS IN LEBANON. HE SAID THAT ACCORDING TO THEIR MOST RECENT AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHY, THE DEPLOYMENT AND SIZE OF SYRIAN FORCES ON EITHER SIDE OF THE LEBANESE FRONTIER IN THE MASLA AREA HAD NOT CHANGED WITHIN THE PAST WEEK. THE ISRAELIS ARE CERTAIN THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO DIMINUTION IN EITHER SYRIAN ARMED FORCES OR SAM EMPLACEMENT, DESPITE REPORTS FROM SOME QUARTERS TO THE CONTRARY.

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PAGE 02 STATE 104448

2. ALLON IS NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT WILL BE REACHED IN THE COMING WEEKS AND IS DEEPLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE PLIGHT OF THE CHRISTIANS. HE WISHED WASHINGTON TO KNOW THAT, ACCORDING TO ALL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE ISRAELIS, THE CHRISTIANS ARE NOT BEING INTRANSIGENT AND ARE NOT BY THEIR BEHAVIOR BLOCKING THE ROAD TO A COMPROMISE SETTLEMENT. THEY ARE UNEASY, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE ARAFAT-SYRIAN UNDERSTANDING SINCE THEY ARE NOT SURE THAT THE FULL CONTENTS OF THE UNDERSTANDING HAD BEEN DISCLOSED. ALLON SAID CRYPTICALLY THAT THE CHRISTIANS NEED ARMS IF IN FACT THEY ARE TO SURVIVE AND HE FELT IT INCOMBENT UPON THEIR FRIENDS TO ENSURE THAT THEIR REQUIREMENTS ARE MET. AS TO AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN PLIGHT, ALLON FEELS THAT WE SHOULD GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO A CANTONAL ARRANGEMENT ALONG SWISS LINES. THIS, ALLON MEANS THAT WHILE LEBANON WOULD REMAIN AN INTEGRAL UNIT THE CHRISTIANS AND THE MUSLIMS WOULD BE PERMITTED CONSIDERABLE AUTONOMY WITHIN AREAS IN WHICH THEY NOW RESIDE. HE RECOGNIZES AS WE DO THAT PARTITION-WHILE ACCEPTABLE TO SOME FACTIONS WITHIN LEBANON-WOULD NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO SYRIA. ON THE OTHER HAND, HE FEELS REASONABLY SURE THAT THE SYRIANS DO NOT WANT CONTINUED STRIFE AND PERHAPS A CANTONAL SOLUTION WOULD BE THE LEAST OF EVILS FOR THEM. JUMBLATT SEEMED TO FAVOR SOMETHING ALONG THESE LINES IN HIS SPEECH LAST WEEK.

3. GENERAL RAVIV (HEAD OF MFA'S INR, WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT) SAID THAT WE SHOULD KNOW THAT WHILE THE SYRIAN EMBARGO ON ARMS TO THE LEFTISTS WAS HELPFUL, IT WAS NOT FULLY EFFECTIVE SINCE THE AIRPORT REMAINS UNDER LEFTIST CONTROL AND, ACCORDING TO ISRAELI INTELLIGENCE, ARMS FLIGHTS FROM IRAQ AND ELSEWHERE ARE NOT ONLY POSSIBLE BUT HAVE ACTUALLY BEEN CARRIED OUT IN RECENT DAYS. SECONDLY, HE FELT WE SHOULD KNOW THAT THERE IS FIRM EVIDENCE THAT THE LIBYANS ARE SUPPLYING THE LEFTISTS FORCES WITH FUNDS WHICH ARE NECESSARY FOR THEIR OPERATIONS WITHIN LEBANON.

4. COMMENT: IT IS EVIDENT THAT LEBANESE DEVELOPMENTS ARE CONTINUING TO GET CLOSE AND HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION IN ISRAEL. THE FACT THAT THE SITUATION IS REGARDED AS SO POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS TO ISRAELI INTERESTS HAS IN RECENT WEEKS ACTED AS A FORM OF CONSTRAINT ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS HERE, CERTAINLY OF A
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PAGE 03 STATE 104448

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